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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7868th meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 January 2017, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report (S/2016/1072) of the Secretary General on the United Nations Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and welcomes the briefing on 13 January 2017 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council welcomes the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 29 December 2016 and its annex concerning the extension of the mandate of the UNOWAS for a further period of three years, from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative and looks forward to efforts to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and good offices, subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, as well as the promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and gender mainstreaming.

"The Security Council welcomes the recent positive political developments in several West African countries, in particular the holding of free and peaceful elections in Cabo Verde and Ghana, and the outcome of the political dialogue in Guinea. The Security Council welcomes the steps taken to develop and institute political, institutional and constitutional reforms in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

"The Security Council takes note of the steps taken by the United Nations system, in partnership with the authorities of Burkina Faso, to pilot a new approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in the country, including the development of a strategic framework to help consolidate stability in the post-transition period. The Security Council encourages UNOWAS to support peacebuilding and sustain peace efforts in other

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countries in West Africa where democratic gains remain fragile, following the comprehensive UN inter-agency approach in Burkina Faso.

"The Security Council welcomes the ongoing work of UNOWAS to promote women's participation in political, peace and security processes and, in this regard, welcomes positive developments in Liberia and Nigeria.

"The Security Council recalls its Press Statement (SC/12616), its PRST (S/PRST/2016/19) and its Resolution (S/RES/2337), welcomes and is encouraged by the decision on political situation in The Gambia of the Fiftieth Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority held in Abuja on 17 December 2016, and welcomes the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 644th meeting held on 12 December 2016 as well as its declaration at its 647th meeting held on 13 January 2017 that as of 19 January 2017, outgoing President, Yahya Jammeh, will cease to be recognized by the AU as legitimate President of the Republic of the Gambia. In this regard, the Security Council requests the Special Representative, through his good offices, to continue facilitating interactions and negotiations aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power from outgoing President, Yahya Jammeh, to the President Adama Barrow.

"The Security Council expresses its concerns over the prevalence of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, and terrorist threats in the region and their linkages to transnational organized crime. In this regard, the Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, in particular in the Lake Chad Basin region, notably by Boko Haram. The Security Council stresses the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The Security Council expresses particular concern about attacks on civilians, who are the primary victims of these terrorist violence.

"The Security Council welcomes the subregional, regional and international efforts to mitigate the security, humanitarian and development consequences of Boko Haram's operations. The Security Council takes note of the progress made in the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The Security Council urges the Members States participating in the MNJTF to further enhance regional military cooperation and coordination, deny haven to Boko Haram, secure the conditions to enable humanitarian access and facilitate the restoration of civilian security and the rule of law in liberated areas. The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular, international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council encourages Member States and multilateral partners to lend their support to the MNJTF to ensure its full operationalization, including the provision of modalities to increase the timely and effective exchange of intelligence to further the region's collective efforts to combat Boko Haram, whenever possible and appropriate. The Security Council underscores the importance of a holistic approach to degrade and defeat Boko Haram that includes coordinated security operations, conducted in accordance

with applicable international law, as well as enhanced civilian efforts to improve governance and promote economic growth in the affected areas. In this regard, the Security Council deeply regrets the tragic incident in Rann, North-East Nigeria, on 17 January 2017, resulted in the deaths of numerous civilians including Internally Displaced Persons and humanitarian workers. The Security Council urges the Government of Nigeria to swiftly investigate the incident and recalls the obligation of all parties to armed conflict to comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian, human right and refugee law.

"The Security Council reiterates deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation caused by the activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region. In this regard, the Security Council calls international community to immediately support the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance for the people most affected by the crisis in Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, including by fulfilling the United Nations appeal for the Lake Chad Basin region. It also urges regional governments to facilitate access for humanitarian organizations and to work with the United Nations and international partners to develop viable options for delivering aid.

"The Security Council expresses continued concern about piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the trafficking of drugs and other illicit goods, the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking and stresses the need to strengthen the fight against illicit activities in the subregion.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region and encourages further collaboration between Member States, regional and subregional organizations, relevant United Nations entities and with other relevant stakeholders to enhance social cohesion and to address challenges to good governance.

"The Security Council commends the engagement of UNOWAS with subregional and regional organizations, in particular, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the G-5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Mano River Union, in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel. The Security Council remains committed to working closely with these organizations through UNOWAS to strengthen subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border security threats and prevent the spread of terrorism. In that respect, they welcome the assistance of UNOWAS to the efforts of ECOWAS Commission to implement its Regional Framework for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance and to promote a coordinated SSR approach in the region.

"The Security Council notes the collaboration undertaken between UNOWAS and the Peacebuilding Commission and encourages continued close and effective cooperation in support of sustainable peace in the region.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States in West Africa and the Sahel to strengthen border security and regional cooperation, including through the G5 Sahel and the Nouakchott process on the enhancement of the security

cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel and Sahara region.

"The Security Council encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners towards the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5), in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes, and, in this regards, highlights the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to climate change impacts.

"The Security Council welcomes the conclusion of the independent evaluation of the UNISS. In this regard, the Security Council requests UNOWAS to coordinate with States in the Sahel and all other stakeholders to provide strategic leadership, guidance and direction to the UN system for the effective implementation of the UNISS, including its thematic focus, coordination arrangements, partnerships and distribution of responsibilities among United Nations entities in the field and at Headquarters.

"The Security Council request UNOWAS to contribute to efforts aimed at sustaining international engagement by reenergizing the commitments and initiatives of all relevant stakeholders, including countries of the region, the various regional mechanisms, United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, emphasizes, in this regard, the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in peacebuilding efforts, and thus, in collaboration with UNOWAS, in mobilizing deeper commitment and partnership between the UN system, the countries of the Sahel and other international and regional partners with the view to advancing the implementation of the Strategy, in collaboration with UNOWAS and to adapting the Strategy to the evolving needs of the region.

"The Security Council further requests UNOWAS to provide the necessary support to the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel and its Technical Secretariat as well as to the G-5 Sahel.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to periodically monitor progress made, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to provide in the upcoming regular report due in July 2017 information on UNOWAS efforts with respect to the following aspects of its UNISS related mandate: a) coherence in the political and programmatic aspects of UNISS, b) streamlining and coordination of initiatives by international, regional actors in the Sahel region, with a view to ensuring that they meet the emerging challenges in the region; c) guidance and leadership of the overall engagement of the UN system and partners with a view to serving the overall objective of the Strategy, and d) advancing the implementation of the 9 flagship projects of UNISS and the assessment of their impact, e) ensuring attention to all UNISS pillars, and funding gaps."